

CONDITION OF FEDERAL BUILDING, SYRACUSE, N. Y.

LETTER FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY AND ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL SUBMITTING A REPORT RELATIVE TO THE CONDITION OF THE FEDERAL BUILDING AT SYRACUSE, N. Y.

JANUARY 21, 1903.—Referred to the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, January 16, 1903.

SIR: In compliance with a provision of section 22 of an act of Congress approved June 6, 1902, increasing the limit of cost of certain public buildings, etc., we have the honor to report relative to the condition of the Federal building at Syracuse, N. Y.

This building is located on the northwest corner of Fayette and Warren streets, fronting south on the former and east on the latter. It covers nearly the entire lot, which has a frontage of 132 feet 4 inches south and 100 feet east.

The site was purchased in 1883 for \$70,000, and the building was completed in 1889 at a cost of \$330,793.49. It contains a basement, four stories, and attic; is faced with Onondaga limestone; is of substantial fireproof construction, and of pleasing design in the Norman style of architecture.

It is estimated that this site is now worth about \$125,000.

The location is an excellent one as far as convenience of access for the public and the receiving and dispatching of mail is concerned, but it is hemmed in by two large seven-story buildings—one abutting on the Government lot on the north and the other separated by Bank alley on the west, which is 33 feet wide. These materially diminish the supply of natural light; on the north side especially artificial light has to be used in nearly all the rooms even on bright days. The cost of lighting the building for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1902, was for electric light \$2,500.80 and for gas \$736.58, making a total of \$3,237.38.

The post-office occupies the entire first floor and one-half of the second floor, which latter space was given over to that office a few years ago, on account of which it was found necessary to move the internal-revenue service out of the building to rented quarters,

The remainder of the second story is occupied by the surveyor of

customs. This space is ample, but the rooms are rather dark, they being on the north side.

In the third story are located the United States court and court offices. These accommodations are sufficient for the use of the court officers, but it has been found necessary for the clerk and the United States attorney each to share one of their rooms with the examiner of pensions and the post-office inspector.

The fourth story is occupied by the railway mail service and jury rooms. The windows in this story are very small, only about 3 feet 6 inches in height, and in consequence there is insufficient light even in the rooms fronting on the streets, otherwise the accommodations are satisfactory.

The attic is not available for offices on account of the lack of light and ventilation.

The Government offices in Syracuse occupying quarters outside of the Federal building are the offices of the collector of internal revenue, the weather bureau, and the United States commissioner. The first named, however, is the only one that pays a rental, and this is \$3,000 per annum.

The population of Syracuse has increased from 51,792 in 1880 to 108,374 in 1900.

Postal receipts in—

1897	\$242, 283. 82
1900	282, 409. 59
Average of customs receipts from 1899 to 1902	94, 039. 35
Average of internal-revenue receipts from 1899 to 1901	2, 613, 347. 08

It will be seen that while the other offices located in this building have not the best accommodations for the transaction of the Government business, it is the post-office that is mostly inconvenienced, both by the lack of natural light and by having certain of its branches, i. e., the money-order and registry divisions and the assistant postmaster and cashier, situated on the second floor. The population of the city and the business of the post-office both have a rapid, healthy growth, and more spacious and suitable quarters for this branch of the service are now necessary and will become urgent within a short time.

In determining the best and most economical method of affording the necessary accommodations for the Government offices in Syracuse consideration has been given to the erection of a separate building for the post-office and the remodeling of the present building for the use of the other offices. This, however, would not entirely solve the problem as to natural light, and besides, considering the additional cost that would be entailed upon the Government in the maintenance of two buildings in that city for janitor service, fuel, lighting, etc., it is believed that the best results would be obtained by the purchase of a new site and the erection of a suitable building thereon, in order that all the Government business may be transacted under one roof, the present building and lot to be sold.

It is estimated that a suitable building of fireproof construction, including vaults, heating and ventilating apparatus, and elevators, and covering an area of 16,000 square feet, would meet the requirements for a considerable number of years, and would cost \$400,000; cost of suitable site, \$140,000; total, \$540,000.

The market value of the present lot is estimated at \$125,000, and while it is thought that \$250,000 could be realized from the sale of both

the site and building, this is somewhat problematical, as it would depend upon the use to be made of the latter.

This communication is accompanied by a minority report, signed by the honorable Postmaster-General, and by the report of the Department representatives.

Respectfully,

H. A. TAYLOR,
Acting Secretary.

J. K. RICHARDS,
Acting Attorney-General.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL,
Washington, D. C., January 16, 1903.

SIR: Under the act of Congress approved June 6, 1902, a commission consisting of a representative from the Treasury Department, one from the Department of Justice, and one from the Post-Office Department was appointed to examine the Government building at Syracuse, N. Y., in order to secure data upon which to base a report to Congress showing in detail the condition of the building, and if not of sufficient capacity to transact the public business, to report as to the best and most economical method of affording relief.

The commission recommended that the present post-office building be retained for use of all of the Government offices other than the post-office and the construction of a new building for the exclusive use of the post-office. In this recommendation I concur. The Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney-General, however, unite in recommending the sale of the present Federal building and the construction of a new building for use of the post-office and all the other Government offices at that place.

The commission reports that the present building and site, exclusive of alterations and repairs, represent an outlay of \$400,793.49, but that it is very doubtful whether as much as \$250,000 could be realized from its sale. A new building suitable for the use of the post-office will cost \$215,000, the site about \$60,000, making a total of \$275,000, according to the estimates furnished by the commission. The present site is in the business center of the city and is convenient of access to the public and for the receipt and dispatch of mails, and the building is well constructed, of pleasing design, and fireproof. It is not, however, large enough to accommodate all of the Government offices.

It is not possible at this time, without paying an exorbitant price, to secure a central location for a new post-office building, and therefore it will be necessary to maintain a branch post-office in the vicinity of the present site. If a new building is constructed for the post-office, the present building will afford ample accommodation for a branch post-office and all of the other Government offices. The additional cost of a new building large enough to accommodate the entire Government service at Syracuse will more than offset the extra expense for heat, light, janitor service, etc., of maintaining two buildings. Furthermore, a building designed especially for post-office purposes and located with particular reference to the convenient handling of

outgoing and incoming mails will be much more economical and satisfactory from a post-office standpoint.

I therefore recommend the construction of a new building for the exclusive use of the post-office and that the present Federal building at Syracuse be retained for use of all other Government offices, including a branch post-office, and beg to refer you to the report of the commission, setting forth in full the advantages of this plan.

Very respectfully,

H. C. PAYNE,
Postmaster-General.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

AUGUST 23, 1902.

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,
THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL, and
THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.

GENTLEMEN: As a commission appointed by you, we have visited Syracuse, N. Y., and examined the Government building at that place in order to secure for you data upon which to base a report to Congress at its next session, in accordance with section 22 of the act of June 6, 1902 (Public, No. 146).

The Government site has a frontage of 132 feet 4 inches on Fayette street, bounded on the east by Warren street and on the west by Bank alley, which is 33 feet wide between building lines. On the other or west side of Bank alley is the McCarthy department store building, 7 stories in height. The frontage of the lot on Warren street is 100 feet, abutting on the north to the Snow Building, 7 stories in height. The Government building in its largest dimensions is 125 feet 4 inches on Fayette street by 85 feet 1 inch on Warren street. An arcaded vestibule projecting on Fayette street reaches the building line, and the front steps project 18 inches beyond it. The Warren street façade is on the building line, the entrance steps projecting $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet on the sidewalk. On the alley side the building sets back 7 feet from the building line, and on the north there is a fire limit of 14 feet 11 inches.

It will be seen that the building occupies nearly a whole lot. Including arcaded vestibule in front and a one-story addition in the rear, it covers an area of 9,587 square feet.

The site was purchased on June 18, 1883, for \$70,000. The building was completed and occupied in 1889. It contains a basement, four stories, and attic. It is faced with Onondaga limestone, the body of the walls rock faced, the window and door trimmings, belt courses, columns, and cornice of dressed stone. The building is fireproof, of very substantial construction, and of pleasing design in Norman style of architecture. To increase the post-office floor space, a one-story extension was built in 1892 on the north side. Alteration and repairs have cost \$12,851.48. The building and repairs and lot represent an outlay of \$413,644.97.

The location is an excellent one, as far as convenience of access for the public and dispatching and receiving of mail is concerned, as the building is practically in the business center of the city, only one block east of Salina street, which is the principal business street of Syracuse, and only four blocks from the Central Railroad station, but

the building is hemmed in on the north and west by seven-story buildings, which diminish the light supply greatly. On the north side especially artificial light has to be used in nearly all rooms, even on bright days. The cost of lighting the building for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1902, was, for electric light, \$2,500.80; gas, \$736.58; total, \$3,237.38. The windows of the fourth story are very small, only about 3½ feet in height, and that story is in consequence insufficiently lighted even on the street frontages. The attic in its present condition is not available for assignments of any importance.

The post-office occupies the whole of the first floor, which covers an area of 9,871 square feet, also a part of second story. On the first floor the post-office lobby, vestibule, stairs, vaults, elevator, walls, columns, etc., take up an area of 3,763 square feet, leaving the available working floor space for post-office 6,108 square feet, subdivided as follows:

	Square feet.
Postmaster.....	418
Inquiry division.....	182
Mailing division.....	4,368
Carriers' division.....	1,140
First floor total.....	6,108

The post-office also occupies part of second floor, viz:

	Square feet.
Assistant postmaster.....	418
Cashier, one room.....	352
Money order, exclusive of public lobby.....	538
Registry, exclusive of public lobby.....	560
Second floor total.....	1,858

This gives the post-office an actual working floor space of 7,966 square feet.

In comparison with other post-offices, for instance, Jersey City, N. J., and Knoxville, Tenn., this space is large. However, the carriers' division is too small, the mailing and dispatching facilities too limited, and the mailing division is insufficiently lighted, requiring the use of artificial light continually. The location of the money order, registry, and assistant postmaster on the second floor is inconvenient, both for the public and the transaction of business with the other departments of the post-office, notwithstanding that there is a private elevator connecting the money order and the registry with the post-office workroom. The railway mail service consists of 1 superintendent and 4 clerks located permanently in Syracuse. The force under control of the office is 275 clerks, of which, however, not over 20 are in the building at the same time.

The space in the building occupied by this service, which is five rooms in the fourth story, of a combined area of 1,576 square feet, has not been considered in connection with the post-office direct, because this service can, in any building, be accommodated in one of the upper stories. The same applies to the post-office inspector, who occupies temporarily one room in the third story, 16 by 22 feet (352 square feet), assigned to the United States attorney.

Adding this floor space to the space occupied by the post-office on the first and second stories, the total area is 9,914 square feet. There is also a small carrier-swing room in the basement of the building.

STATISTICS OF THE POST-OFFICE.

Besides the main office there are 4 carrier stations scattered through the city which are practically small post-offices; also 9 substations for the sale of stamps, issuing of money orders, and registering mail. Besides the postmaster and assistant postmaster, there are employed 77 carriers and 63 clerks, making a total of 142 persons. United States census gives the population of Syracuse for—

1880	51,792
1890	88,143
1900	108,374

The postal receipts since 1897 have been as follows:

During the year ending December 31—

1897	\$242,283.82
1898	248,719.88
1899	264,559.58
1900	282,409.59
1901	299,328.96
1902 (6 months)	164,809.18

In the present quarters it is almost impossible to systematize the operations of the office so as to give the best service. The several divisions and subdivisions can not be kept entirely distinct, as they should be, and consequently confusion can not always be avoided, especially when incoming and outgoing mails must necessarily go through the same channel.

The second story contains, besides the accommodations of some branches of the post-office already mentioned, the following:

Surveyor of customs:	Square feet.
One room, 19 by 22 feet	418
One room, 16 by 11 feet	176
One room, 13 by 22 feet	286
Two vaults, each 8 by 10 feet	160
Total	1,040
One storeroom	616
Total	1,656

One toilet room.

Excepting the one room on the northwest corner of the building, 19 by 22 feet, the rooms of the surveyor are rather dark; otherwise the accommodations are satisfactory.

STATISTICS OF SURVEYOR OF CUSTOMS.

Receipts for fiscal year ending June 30—

1897	\$50,990.51
1898	64,995.02
1899	90,683.41
1900	100,352.02
1901	93,241.12
1902	91,880.83

The decrease in the receipts of last two years is to be accounted for by decrease in steel importation.

The third story contains 1 large court room extending through two stories, 2 rooms for the United States judge, with private toilet room, 2 rooms for the clerk of the court, of which 1 is used also by the exam-

iner of pensions, 1 room for the United States attorney, used also by the post-office inspector, 1 room for deputy marshal, and 1 general toilet room.

The court is in session only a few days during the year and there is no objection to the joint occupancy of the 2 rooms above specified. The accommodations for the court are amply sufficient.

The fourth story contains, besides the 5 rooms occupied by the railway mail service, already mentioned in connection with the post-office, 4 jury rooms and a private toilet room. These accommodations are amply sufficient; in fact 2 of the jury rooms are never used. As already stated, the fourth story is insufficiently lighted.

The attic contains 2 large rooms for janitor, 1 large toilet room, seldom used, and 4 unoccupied rooms, originally assigned for sleeping rooms of railway mail clerks. The rooms are arranged in pairs, with only one dormer window to each pair. The light and ventilation is consequently very poor, and the rooms are not fit for anything but storage.

The basement contains, besides heating apparatus and storage rooms for fuel, a small room used as a bonded warehouse by the surveyor of customs.

There are several offices which have accommodations in other buildings, but only one is so located, on account of lack of room in the Government building; the others are so from choice.

The principal office is that of the collector of internal revenue, which is located in the second story of the University building, a modern fireproof 10-story building, half a block distant from the post-office. The office occupies a floor space of 2,057 square feet, including a public lobby of 264 square feet, a storeroom, and vault, for which an annual rental of \$3,000 is paid. The accommodations are excellent, and in our opinion amply sufficient, although the collector states that more storeroom is desirable.

STATISTICS OF INTERNAL REVENUE.

The force consists of 1 collector, 2 clerks, 1 gauger, 7 deputies. The annual collections of the district are as follows:

During the fiscal year ending June 30—

1897.....	\$885,574.05
1898.....	1,091,930.98
1899.....	2,800,146.55
1900.....	2,734,022.20
1901.....	2,305,872.48

Reduction on tax on beer and Spanish war stamps is responsible for decrease of collections for the last two years.

The second office is the Weather Bureau, which has accommodations in one of the buildings of the Syracuse University, which is located on a high elevation in the eastern part of the city. This location is the best possible, and we do not recommend its removal. No rent is paid.

The third is the United States commissioner, who is a practicing lawyer, and has 2 rooms in one of the large office buildings. The Government is at no expense for these quarters.

A summary of the situation is this:

The Government building is not large enough to accommodate all Government offices located in Syracuse. The post-office is somewhat

cramped for room, but not excessively so. But the post-office business is increasing, and in five years the post-office accommodations will be insufficient. Owing to high buildings on two sides quite close to the Government building, the light on the north and west sides is insufficient. The post-office, especially, is badly lighted, requiring artificial light in the greater portion of the workroom. The money order, registry, assistant postmaster, and cashier are located on the second floor, which is inconvenient for the public and for the transaction of business.

As previously stated, the site and building, exclusive of repairs, represent an outlay of \$400,793.49.

The lot was purchased in 1883 for \$70,000; the ground has appreciated, and its present value is about \$125,000, but if the lot and building were to be sold, it is very doubtful if as much as \$250,000 could be realized. The reason is obvious. The building itself is not suitable for anything except public use, and the only likely purchaser would be the city administration, who might acquire it for the use of one of its offices, for instance, police headquarters. Under these circumstances it would be poor policy for the Government to dispose of the property. But as it is certainly desirable to make provision for a larger post-office and bring all other offices under one roof, we recommend the construction of a new building for the use of the post-office only, and the removal of the internal revenue to the first floor of the present Government building. The rooms of the upper stories should be reassigned, so as to bring all the important offices to the two street fronts. A small part of the first story should be arranged for the bonded warehouse for the surveyor of customs. A substation of the post-office should also be located on the first floor of the present building. There will be ample room for the accommodation of all Government offices in the present building after the removal of the post-office.

The new post-office need not be ready for occupancy until four or five years hence, but it is certainly advisable to acquire a suitable site at an early date, as the price of property is advancing.

We have gone into the question of sites very thoroughly, and submit herewith a list of sites in order of their merit, by which we mean a balance between suitable location and cost. If cost were eliminated, No. 2 would be placed at the head of the list.

No. 1. On the southwest corner of East Adams and South Warren streets could be obtained a desirable piece of ground of about 35,000 square feet for about \$60,000. This location is four blocks south of the present post-office building and within a half block of South Salina street, the business street of the city. Directly opposite this site is the new high school.

Harrison place, which is 45 feet wide, extends through the block toward East Adams street some distance, and could be extended clear through to Adams street should the property be acquired for the post-office purposes. This would give the proposed post-office practically three street frontages. Taking into consideration the availability of this location and its proximity to the business center of the city, we recommend it as a suitable and desirable site for the purposes required. The estimated cost as given above is very reasonable compared with the cost of other sites inspected by us.

No. 2. There is a triangular piece of ground bounded by Onondaga, South Warren, and Harrison streets, containing about 37,500 square feet. This location is undoubtedly the best in the city for a Govern-

ment building, and has by general consent of the business people of the city been looked upon as being used for a post-office building at some future time. The estimated cost at which the property could be acquired is about \$140,000. This alone precludes us from recommending its selection.

No. 3. A suitable site for a public building could be obtained on the corner of Genesee and South State streets, Onondaga street diverging from the latter. This property faces Fayette Park and could be acquired for about \$100,000. It is three blocks east of the present post-office. The improvements are substantial in character and of some value, which adds to the value of the property.

No. 4. A suitable site could be obtained on the corner of South Salina and West Adams of about 30,000 square feet for about \$100,000.

No. 5. On the north side of the Erie Canal, which divides the city in two nearly equal sections, there is an available site for a post-office building on the corner of North State street and James street. The price of this is about \$100,000.

No. 6. Another location on the north side is what is known as the "Old Allen-Monroe" property. This is about six blocks from the present post-office and contains ample space, nearly 50,000 square feet. The property belongs to one man, and its estimated value is about \$50,000.

It should be observed in this connection that the present business center, and also approximately the center of population, is at the intersection of Salina and Fayette streets, one block west of the present Government building. About ten years ago the center was at the bridge over the canal, two blocks north. The improvements have a tendency to move south, and the probabilities are that in fifteen to twenty years the center will be at the intersection of Salina and Onondaga streets, the location of site No. 2. Site No. 1 is two blocks southeast of site No. 2.

A new post-office building should be large enough to provide accommodations for the next twenty-five years without the necessity of any addition. We estimate that a building of 15,000 square feet area would fulfill this condition. It should be basement and two stories in height, of which the second story, however, need not be larger than about 4,000 to 5,000 square feet, furnishing accommodations for the Railway Mail Service and post-office inspectors. We estimate the—

Cost of such a building of fireproof construction, built of brick with stone trimmings	\$215, 000
Cost of site.....	60, 000
Total	275, 000

We recommend an appropriation at the next session of Congress for the purchase of a suitable site. Erection of the building could be deferred without much detriment to the public service for one and possibly even two years.

Respectfully,

GEO. O. VON NERTA,
Representative of Treasury Department.

F. E. DU PAUL,
Representative of United States Post-Office Department.

R. V. LA DOW,
Representative of United States Department of Justice.

